

# ***Boston Vintage Sports Flashback***

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JUNE 29, 1938

## **SOX WIN, 6-4, WITH MARCUM**

### **Foxx Hits 22d Homer, Cronin His Seventh**

**By Hy Hurwitz, The Boston Globe**

The Red Sox left the post like Menow up at Fenway Park yesterday afternoon and, after a stout challenge in midgame, they coasted home like Hal Prince Headley's 3-year-old to knock off the Washington Senators, 6 to 4.

Celebrating their return to the old homestead, Jimmy Foxx and Scarface" Joe Cronin thumped out homers over the left field barrier in their first trips to the batting dish. Also playing a promising role with his club was Michael Francis Higgins, the consecutive-batting-streak-record wrecker. "Pinky" poled a double in the fifth inning that chased home the two runs by which the Sox won.

#### **Marcum Great in Pinches**

Jawn Marcum, the hardluck hillbilly, came up with some great clutch pitching in the stretch and for a change received some powerhouse support to land his sixth triumph of the season. The eminent citizen from Eminence, Ky., was cuffed for 10 solid base knocks, but with his scalp in danger he hitched his trousers and blew the Senators down.

With two gone in the opening inning, Double-X teed off on one of Dutch Leonard's knucklers and hoisted the pellet into the left field chicken-wiring for his 22d homer of the year. As he congratulated Foxx, Skipper Cronin said to Jimmy, "Watch Me Now." The count went up to 3 and 2 and then Joe hit the payoff pitch as it reached the left field wall but stayed in fair territory long enough for Joe to get credit for his seventh homer of the season.

#### **Rick Ferrall Fans**

One of these runs was retrieved by the Nats in the second on successive singles by Al Simmons, Zeke Bonura and Cecil Travis with none gone. The sacks became saturated when Buddy Myer walked, but Marcum fanned Rick Ferrell and made Leonard slap into a fast double play that killed off a big Washington threat.

Bobby Doerr opened Boston's second by beating out a slow roller toward Buddy Lewis and when Buddy heaved the ball into right field, Doerr scampered to second. he was sacrificed to third by Johnny Peacock and scored on marcum's single to center.

The senators knotted the game in the fourth. Simmons led off with a single and with one gone was forced at second by Travis. Singles by Myer and Rick Ferrell followed and with Cronin bobbling a relayed throw from Ben Chapman, two Washingtonians crossed the plate and the boys had to start from scratch.

#### **Senators Toss a Scare**

In the fifth, the Sox opened up a lead that matched Menow. It all happened with two out. Joe Vosmik doubled, Foxx singled, Cronin doubled and Higgins doubled, the latter's two-bagger driving home Double-X and Cronin, with the winning runs.

Entering the stretch, Washington threw a scare into the pace-setting Sox. Rick Farrell banged out his second single and took third when the pinch-hitting Wright doubled to right. After Case flied to Cramer in short center, West rolled down to Cronin and while Joe was disposing of West at first, Ferrell crossed the platter with the final run of the game.

#### **HIT AND RUN**

The Sox picked up a game on the Indians. . . .They are now five games below the roof. . . .Second and final game of the series this afternoon. . . .It will probably be Jim Bagby for the Sox and Jimmy DeShong for the Senators. . . .Cronin and Foxx each made three hits, Joe getting eight bases on his blows, while Jimmy got six. . . .Double-X knocked in two more runs, boosting his seasons mark to 80 in 61 games. . . .The afternoon was enlivened by the right smart Cuban Navy Band direct from Havana. . . .And to the surprise of all, they didn't play one rumba number. . . .Black Jack Wilson threw the ball today and said he was ready and raring to go. . . .Doerr had eight chances in the first five innings and handled them all perfectly. . . .Lewis made a great one-handed stop of Doerr's rap in the fourth that stole a hit from Bobby. . . .West ran about two blocks to pull down Vosmik's drive in deep left center in the third. . . .Someone should say something to Al Simmons for an uncalled-for smart-aleck trick he played. . . .He was a bit peeved at his failure to hit safely in the eighth and on the way back to the bench, he raised the cover off the ball vault near the batter's box and heaved it against the grandstand. . . .It might have resulted in a serious accident if Peacock had had to chase a foul and had stumbled into the open pit where they keep the balls. . . .Marcum retired the last nine batters in order.

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JUNE 3, 1958

# SOX SUBDUE INDIANS

## 7-3 Win Saved By Wall in 9th

By Cliff Keane, The Boston Globe

It took Tom Brewer 41 days to win a ball game, and Murray Wall had to make a stout performance to clinch it last night at Fenway Park.

Strange history this right hander, so great at times and then everything collapses suddenly. For seven innings against the Indians Brewer pitched one-hit ball. But in the seventh the Indians got him for three runs and in the ninth they loaded the bases on three straight singles and nobody out.

But Wall came in. . .struck out pinch-hitter J.W. Porter on three pitches. . .got Preston Ward to pop up to Frank Malzone on the second pitch. . .got Bobby Avila to ground out to Malzone who stepped on third base for a forceout.

And the Red Sox had won, 7 to 3, before 20,665.

Dick Gernert had a home run, his eighth, in the fifth off southpaw Andy Tomanek, with two men on and the Red Sox scored twice in the seventh without a ball going out of the infield.

Pete Runnels got a single when nobody was at first base after Mickey Vernon had stopped the second baseman's grounder and Bob Kelly walked two men to load the bases.

### Berberet Gets Triple

The other Red Sox run was scored by Frank Malzone, who edged along after two walks and scored on Brewer's long liner to Larry Doby. And in the fourth, Lou Berberet got a triple after Doby tracked down his long smash alongside the Red Sox bullpen, but dropped the ball as he slid on the dirt. Jim Piersall brought him home with a ringing double to left center.

But Brewer - "our guys were talking about his great curve ball all night," said Manager Bobby Bragan - hadn't given a hit for four innings and Chico Carrasquel broke the spell with a double off the left field wall in the fifth.

Frank Malzone hit a 40-foot grounder to Ward who threw wide to first base and Jackie Jensen walked to force in another run. That was enough for Kelly and Hoyt Wilhelm came in to retire the next two men

Carrasquel stayed there and Brewer eased through the sixth easily. But in the seventh, after Rocky Colavito's high hopper had skidded off Billy Klaus' glove for an error with one out, Russ Nixon singled. So did Carrasquel. . .so did Ward batting for Tomanek.

But Avila struck out while the Red Sox bullpen was in full employ.

Two strikeouts in the eighth and Minnie Minoso grounded easily to shortstop.

But whack! Singles by Colavito, Nixon and Carrasquel and up came Wall.

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For 16 years people have been wondering why Ted Williams hadn't hit more to left field.

In the first inning, Williams doubled high off the left field wall.

When he came up in the third inning, the Indians were in the

shift and Williams fouled off a bunt. Much excitement in the crowd. Two pitches later Williams bunted between Mudcat Grant and third base and he was thrown out easily.

As Williams headed towards first base, the towels came sailing out of the Cleveland mockery.

But Bragan said a "couple of hisd players did it just to poke a little fun at Ted.

"But I don't fall for that stuff," he said. "I'm in favor of letting guys in slumps - especially guys like Williams - alone. All right to toss 'em at an umpire, maybe. but not a Williams."

**SCATTERED PIECES:** Brewer's last win was against Baltimore on April 23 when he went eight innings and won, 7-5. . .The Indians have used seven men at third base so far. . .Fred Hatfield, Bobby Avila, Ward, Carrasquel, Geiger, Minoso and Harrell. . .Herb Score rejoined the Indians and will take things easy until his inflamed left elbow gets better. . ."The doctor told me to throw if it didn't hurt," said score. . ."So, I'll just take it easy until the pain leaves. . .but apparently there isn't anything seriously wrong. . .Apparently Doby reinjured his throwing arm again. . .Over the last seven innings he was flipping the ball back to the infield, but his bat has been hot and Bragan thought he could do some damage with it. . .But Brewer fanned him twice and got him to hit into a double play. . .Brewer also fanned Mickey Vernon three times. . .The choice of Porter to bat against Wall was a hunch by Bragan. . .Recently in Cleveland, Porter won a game with a pinch homer. . ."I had a leftie, Geiger, or Porter," said Bragan. . ."So I went with Porter off his home run against Baltimore, despite Wall being a righthander." . .Frank Sullivan against Ray Narleski this afternoon.

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MAY 19, 1981

# TANANA SINKS MARINERS, 4-0

By Peter Gammons, The Boston Globe

He is the only 27-year-old around who talks about "the good old days." Really now, it wasn't that long ago - Debby, not Pat Boone - that Frank Tanana threw the ball at 98.6 mph, but long enough for him to talk of happier days and then take his 0-4 record and return to them.

"I'd been thinking about it after the last start I'd had," says Tanana, "then I talked to my dad last week when we were in Minnesota and he said why not? Try it.' So when I went out to the bullpen to warm up (Thursday), I went back to my old style. I went back to driving with my legs, being a power pitcher, the way I hadn't pitched in a year. Then I got my answer between that start and tonight when I recuperated well. And, well, this was like the good old days again."

Transferring from Tom House University to Frank Tanana College, he ended the frustrations and aggravations of his seven winless starts. Tanana allowed five singles, struck out a 1981 team-high nine Mariners and allowed one runner as far as second base, going through Seattle for the 4-0 victory - his first in any uniform but that of the Angels - that he accomplished with the apparent ease of a whittler on the front porch. It was not only Boston's first shutout of 1981, but the first for Tanana since June 5, 1979 against Toronto.

What he needed he got from the chairmen of Geezers Inc.

Carl Yastrzemski, going back to his pre-'67 stance for the first time in a decade, knocked in two runs with a drive off The Wall in the fifth off loser Mike Parrott (1-2). Then, for last-inning insurance, Tony Perez drove his fifth homer into the center-field bleachers in the eighth for the final two runs. He also had Jerry (.364) Remy and Dwight (.346) Evans on base five times and Dave Stapleton making a strong play in the hole (asked if he would stay there when Glenn Hoffman is healthy, Ralph Houk replied, "I'll cross that bridge when I come to it").

But the night was Tanana's. "It was a great feeling behind him, just like the old days," said Remy, who, to help Tanana out of his bad luck, drove him to the park and made him touch every fuse box entering the clubhouse. "He had a great curveball, then as the game went along, his plate got bigger and bigger (in the eyes of hitters and umpire Bill Kunkel), just the way it always did." Stapleton never was in on Tanana's happy days, but he knew what was happening three batters into the game. "He busted that fastball in on (Tom) Paciorek," said Stape, "then threw a curveball and ran it away . . . I'd seen enough."

It's not that Tanana had pitched badly. He'd lost two 2-1 games. He'd had outstanding stuff against Baltimore and Minnesota and seen the earth move around him. But last night was his best. "The biggest difference," said pitching coach Lee Stange, "was in his curveball. That's where he was getting hurt the most, there, and when his fastball, that he tried to get in, ran back over the plate. Tonight, he had no problems with either of them."

Two of the five singles were chinkers, although one of them got him in early trouble. He had given one of his two walks to rookie David Henderson leading the third, then catcher Terry Bulling dropped a quail into right. "I started worrying oh, no, here we go again," said Houk. But Tanana popped Jimmy Anderson up, Lenny Randle hit into a double play - thanks to strong throws by Carney Lansford and Remy - and no Mariner again saw the brightlights of second.

The Tanana Style was "using my legs, extending properly and getting the arm speed to be a power pitcher," as he described it. "I really only got away from it because I hurt my arm. I think I threw this way when they were about to can me in Anaheim - it was against the Red Sox (June 15, a 6-5 loss to Steve Renko). I had problems recuperating between starts, and went on to change my style (to what he was throwing in spring training and his first six starts). What's amazing is that I can go back to my old style any time and never have problem with my control.

"It's hard not knowing which arm's going to show up. But now I'll have to have a different regiment, because my legs are crucial to me. It'll require a few more whirlpools."

All the Mariners weren't about to compare him to the Happy Days Frankie Boy. "He's never forgotten how to pitch," said Richie Zisk, "but there's no way he's close to what he was three or four years ago." Still, what he threw last night was enough to win. "No question," said Tanana.

And Yaz went back to his old style, too. "I had to make the adjustment because they were pitching me away so much," he said. "(Monday) I went out and took some extra BP and tried to go to the opposite field and up the middle more, something I hadn't done in ten years. Maybe now they'll start coming back in again."

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MAY 29, 1940

## BEES BUNCH FOUR HITS AND BEAT PHILLIES, 3 TO 1

### Errickson Wins His Second Game, Mahan's Single Puts Only Run Over

By James C. O'Leary, The Boston Globe

By bunching four of their six hits in the seventh inning of the game with the Phillies at National League Field yesterday, the Bees won the first of the series by a score of 3 to 1.

A double by Buddy Hassett, a single by Max West, a double by Chet Ross, and a single by Eddie Miller, with a fly to the outfield by Al Lopez, were the run producers.

Errickson was pretty near air-tight. He held the Phillies to two widely separated hits in the first seven innings, and their only run resulted from an unusual play in the eighth.

In this session, Bragan led off with an infield hit. Atwood flied to West in short right field. Bragan struck on first, but Atwood rounded the bag, and West probably thinking Bragan had moved off tried to double him up. He threw to first, but nobody covered the bag, and the ball hit Atwood, who was already out on West's catch, and bounded off at an angle so that none of the Bees could handle it, and Bragan went to second.

### Stengel Protests

Stengel rushed on to the field and protested to umpire Dunn, claiming the ball was dead because of Atwood's unintentional interference and that Bragan should be sent back to first. The umpire would not entertain the proposition and, after play had been resumed, Lopez seemingly made some comment for which he was put out of the game. When inquiry was made from the press box why Lopez was banished. Umpire Sears, who was behind the plate, said he did not know, and Umpire Dunn volunteered no information.

Martin, batting for Beck, flied to center field, and Mahan the Somerville boy, singled to center, scoring Bragan from second with the Phillies' only run of the game. Marty also singled, but Mueller grounded to Hassett for the third out, Buddy making a fine play on the sharply-hit ball, and the tension was relieved.

Beck had also pitched effectively. He had held the Bees to two hits in the first six innings, a single by West in the fourth after two were out, and a single by Ross in the fifth.

### Lively Seventh

In the seventh, the Bees got to him. Hassett led off with a double to right, went to third on West's single, and trotted home with the first run of the game when Ross doubled to right. Cuccinelli was purposely passed, filling the bases; Lopez flied to deep center, West scoring after the catch, and Ross scored the third run of the inning on Miller's single. Hoerst pitched to only three men in the eighth. The pitching on both sides was so good there were no outstanding fielding stunts.

There is a doubleheader on the program for today, with Sullivan and Piechota or Lou Fette in line to pitch for the Bees,

and Higbe and Pearson as the Phillies' probable starters.

Gene Moore, purchased from the Brooklyn club yesterday, will play in right field for the Bees with West in Center.

#### BEE LINES

Erickson turned in his second win of the season, going the full distance in both games.

Piechom was not feeling well yesterday, and Stengel may use Lou Fette in one of the games today.

That was a big surge by the Bees in the seventh inning of yesterday's game.

Max West made two of the Bees' six hits, both singles, and Ross made two, a single and a double.

Buddy Hassett started the big batting rally in the seventh with a double

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JULY 8, 1950

## BRAVES WIN ON CHIPMAN 4-HITTER, 4-2

**Jethroe Homers, Scores 3 Runs; Torgeson  
Doubles In 2 Mates in 7th**

**By Jack Barrey, The Boston Globe**

The Braves bought Bob Chipman from the Cubs chiefly because of his consistent success against the Tribe's long-time nemesis, the St. Louis Cardinals. Last night the veteran southpaw continued to demonstrate his effectiveness against other clubs as well, as he held the New York Giants to four hits, hurling Boston to a 4 to 2 win.

It was the fifth victory of the year for Chipman, who has become as established as a full-fledged starter along with Warren Spahn, Johnny Sain and Vern Bickford. No longer are the Braves praying for Jupiter Pluvius to take his regular turn.

Chipman faced only 24 men pitching shutout ball for seven innings. He weakened slightly in the eighth when two walks in the eighth when two walks and a hit by Brave-baiter Eddie Stanky produced a pair of runs.

Chipman was rough on the New Yorkers from the outset. Stanky opened the game with a single, stole second and took third on Del Crandall's poor throw. But Chipman fanned Bill Rigney and Monte Irvin, and forced power-hitter Bobby Thomson to ground out to Roy Hartsfield. That was the tipoff. Chipman had his stuff, and the Giants never threatened again until the eighth.

#### Jethroe Speed Pays Off

Meanwhile, Sam Jethroe was the big factor in the Braves' offense which had compiled four runs. Sam scored three of the tallies. He got the first one in the opening round on another of his pieces of daring base-running, which are luring more and more fans at Braves Field.

Hartsfield and Jethroe singled in succession, but Torgy, attempting to bunt, forced Hartsfield at third. Koslo attempted to pick Jethroe off second, the ball hit Sam and he sped to third.

Then came Jethroe's clever coup, typical of his head work and fleetness of foot.

Bob Elliott grounded to third-sacker Rigney, a routine play. Rigney hardly looked at Jethroe, expecting Sam to stay glued to third and made his across the diamond throw to nip Elliott.

With the toss, Jethroe was off for home and with a beautiful slide evaded Westrum's tag. the crowd roared approval of Sam's neat effort for minutes.

On his next time at bat, in the third, Jethroe switched from brainwork and speed to power, belting his ninth homer. It was the first home run he has hit righthanded at Braes Field, and it was a tremendous wallop, bouncing off the big scoreboard in left field.

Earl Torgeson doubled home the runs that proved the victory margin in the seventh. Hartsfield and jethroe had singled, and both scored easily on the wallop. Torgy was out, however, trying to stretch it into a triple.

#### BRAVES BUZZINGS

The Braves gained a full game on the second-place Cardinals, whom they now trail by two games, and on the fourth-place, defending champion Dodgers, whom they lead by 2 1/2 games.

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The triumph gave the Tribe a 9-2 margin against the Giants for the first half of the season's series between the clubs.

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Chipman recovered rapidly after his eighth-inning lapse. He got the last three batters, Westrum, Dark and Thompson on eight pitches.

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A crowd of 21,885 saw the game, which was highlighted by sharp fielding plays.

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DECEMBER 28, 1971

## MORE CARDIAC BY CELTICS; TRAIL BY 17, CATCH PHILLY

**By Bob Ryan, The Boston Globe**

PHILADELPHIA - If you're not interested in reading about a team and a sports contest, both of which have done more to advance the cause of cardiac arrest than the wildest Tokyo cab driver, then turn to the obituaries. This story is not for you.

Well, folks, they did it again. The increasingly exciting Boston Celtics won their ninth straight ball game with a routine (for them) nailbiter, a 120-116 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers before 12,717 frustrated fans at the Spectrum last night.

To accomplish this feat, the Celtics adopted the novel expedient of surrendering the first eight points of the game to the Sixers. For further thrills, they played the first half of the third

quarter in slow motion, falling behind by 16 points (81-65). They then hitched up their pants and outscored the home squad, 30-12, in the last 6:58 of the period to take a 95-93 three-quarter lead.

But, of course, the game was not decided until the last five seconds, when the umpteenth consecutive turn of events in this wild game occurred. That was when Bob Rule's little turnaround fell off the rim and the rebound was grabbed by Jo Jo White.

Had Rule made the shot, there would have been a tie. White swished two free throws with one second left to account for the final score, but lets go back a moment or two.

With 22 seconds to go, Philly, trailing 118-116, had the ball. It went, naturally, to Billy (24 points, 21 rebounds) Cunningham. "We were looking for him to go into the middle," explained distraught Sixer coach Jack Ramsey. "He has his play, or else we go into the options."

The Kangaroo Kid started to his left. But, just like a fun house gorilla, out popped Dave Cowens. At the same time, John Havlicek switched over to Bob Rule. The ball went to Hal Greer, but - aha! - there was Don Nelson. Greer's ensuing lay-up was off-balance, and the rebound went to Don Chaney after Dave Cowens banged it on the floor.

Chaney then proceeded to miss three free throws (he was fouled, of course), setting up the Rule thing.

The Celtics survived a scoring drought which saw them score only three field goals in 10:45 from the end of the second quarter through the middle of the third. Artie Williams came off the bench to really give the club a lift, and the comeback, consisting of superb running, actually looked quite easy.

The final quarter was a battle of errors. Three consecutive traveling calls, together with a 12-point run by Kevin Loughery, enabled Philly to turn a 108-100 Boston lead with 6:28 left into a 116-115 Sixer bulge on a three-point play by Rule with 1:17 left.

The actual Boston winner was a back door lay-up feed from Cowens to Havlicek with 37 seconds left. This was followed by a Havlicek-induced offensive foul call on Cunningham and a strategic foul conversion by White with 22 seconds remaining.

Heinsohn, who approached apoplexy with each succeeding traveling violation, was buoyant, if not exactly exuberant, over the win. "When you're 16 down and come back like that - you've got a ball club," he enthused.

So who's to argue?

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NOVEMBER 18, 1976

## SO-SO BRUINS JUST GET BY, 3-2

By Francis Rosa, The Boston Globe

There it was again: Another Bruins hockey game at the Boston Garden; another small crowd (9946), and another life and death struggle.

This time it was with the Capitals (the Bruins play them again tonight in Washington), pulling their goalie with 38 seconds to play. And it was Washington's turn to fail.

The Bruins won, 3-2, on Hank Nowak's misfired goal. And how many times in 18 games would you guess the opponents have pulled their goalies against the Bruins?

"That's the most exciting play in hockey," says coach Don Cherry. "Every bench I know of is up yelling 'the goalie's out.'"

But it has happened to us so much, our bench doesn't say anything."

Cherry thinks it's going to be that way all season. "We played just good enough to win. The end result makes me happy." You too, would be happy with a 14-3-1 record.

And you'd be happy that your goals came from three men whose scoring has been rather quiet this season, in order, Dallas Smith (his first); Brad Park (his second) and Hank Nowak (his third). Just like that, one, two, three.

Let's take them in reverse order.

Nowak's third. He was playing after missing five games with a bruised knee. "He fanned on the shot," said Park, who had given the puck to Nowak on his right. "The goalie thought he was going to get to it and it went off his foot." Said the goalie, Ron Low, "It was traveling at a speed of about half-a-mile an hour.

No matter, it counted, it gave the Bruins a 3-1 lead and held up as the winner.

Park's goal: With 26 seconds to go in the second period (score, 1-1), Peter McNab cleared the puck into the Washington end. It hit a seam in the boards and, as Low went behind the net for it, the puck bounced out to the crease.

There was Park barreling in, so fast that he caught teammate Bob Schmautz off guard. "I just tipped it in," said Park. He landed on his butt and slid across the ice with a smile on his face. "Schmautz gave me a pretty good shot," said Park.

"He decked me - but, hey, that second goal was a long time in coming." Said Schmautz, "I couldn't believe he'd be skating that hard so late in the period. I tried to step aside, but I hit him anyway."

And Smith's goal: It started the second period. "I had pushed the puck over the blue line," said Smith, and Wayne Cashman might have picked it up, but he left it for me. He might have been offside so he just didn't take any chances." Smith went on from there, drifting right and putting a backhand just inside the far post from 15 feet out.

Guy Charron brought Washington up to 1-1 after Smith's goal, hitting the far side with a 25-footer from the right. And Ace Bailey brought the Capitals back to within one when he shook off Gary Doak in the crease and tapped Hartland Monahan's pass out by Gilles Gilbert's glove side with six minutes left.

Gilbert twice prevented a tie. With 1:40 to play, he beat Rob Sirois to the puck in the left circle and then stickhandled into the corner with it. He's been paying strict attention to Gerry Cheevers, no doubt. And, with two seconds to go, he took a Monahan blast on his pads.

Don't forget the goalies.

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DECEMBER 12, 1993

## A WIN IS A WIN IS A WIN...

**Patriots don't bottom out**

By Ron Borges, The Boston Globe

FOXBOROUGH - The New England Patriots proved who rules the bottomland of the National Football League yesterday.

All through this dreary season they insisted they were the

best 1-11 team in football and yesterday they had a chance to prove it against the equally inept Cincinnati Bengals. They made their point with barely any points.

In a comedy of offensive errors that took an unexpectedly dramatic turn just before the final curtain, the Patriots managed to escape the jaws of the Bengals by a score of 7-2. The score fit the game.

This was the kind of victory that left All-Pro tackle Bruce Armstrong hiding his head when it was decided simply because his eyes no longer could bear to watch what his mind feared was about to happen.

His team had taken a 7-0 lead with 25 seconds left in the first half when quarterback Drew Bledsoe completed four passes in 44 seconds, including an 8-yard scoring strike to tight end Ben Coates, but the Patriots had done little else all day with the ball other than drop it or have poor Scott Sisson kick it wide right again from 27 yards out for his fourth miss in his last five attempts, including three from inside the 30.

Remarkably, however, the Bengals had done even less with it. They dropped it. They fair caught it on a kickoff at the 20-yard line. They fumbled it on a punt, then got a 40-yard kick off only to have it wiped out by a penalty. They threw it incomplete 16 of the 25 times David Klingler launched it. All in all, they managed just 55 yards in the second half until the situation arose that had Armstrong retreating inside a cave of cloth, a place where sound but no pictures would penetrate.

His team had just utterly mishandled a punt when Mike Saxon allowed a perfectly fine snap to slip through his fingers with just over four minutes left in the game. When he finally ran it down and kicked it, the ball slammed into the stomach of the Bengals' Fernandus Vinson and rolled out of bounds at the New England 30. Trouble, Armstrong knew from long experience in New England, was brewing.

Six plays later the ball sat a foot away from the goal line. It was fourth-and-goal from 12 inches with 1:21 to play, and the Patriot defense had failed in such red zone situations 32 times this year. Thirty-two times opponents had gotten inside New England's 20-yard line. Thirty-two times they had scored. Those being the facts, Bruce Armstrong knew what to do.

"I pulled my hood over my head and sat down," Armstrong said. "I couldn't even watch it. I've been here long enough to know things like that usually go against us. I didn't see anything. I listened for the noise. Either way it would be pretty distinctive."

Seconds later it was a roar and not the absence of one that told Armstrong he and his teammates finally had been paroled from purgatory with the aid of Bengals coach David Shula and the quick eye of inside linebacker Vincent Brown.

Despite the fact Harold Green had been running hard and successfully on the drive to that point, Shula chose to take him out in favor of little used Eric Ball, a back who had carried the ball only seven times all season and not once to that point yesterday. When Brown saw Ball and the formation Cincinnati was in, he knew what was coming.

"We knew the plays they ran consistently," Brown said. "They had a back in there {Ball} they run outside. We'd seen them in similar situations against the Jets and Raiders. When they line up in that formation with him in the backfield they let him try to outrun the defense {wide}. Teams do what they practice."

Brown was exactly right. The Bengals rejected what had worked earlier for them on a fourth-and-short situation by refusing to send Derrick Fenner on a dive over the top that he said after the game he was ready to make. Instead Shula chose to let Ball run wide with left guard Ken Moyer trying to pull out in front of him to open a hole Ball could cut back into. But Rod

Smith knocked Moyer down, Fenner missed his block on Terry Ray and Ball was forced to continue wide. Waiting for him was defensive end Mike Pitts.

"Smith made a great play," Moyer said. "He undercut me and that took away the inside hole we wanted to cut back into. After that, there was nothing we could do. He took away the hole."

As Smith was cutting down Moyer, Pitts was spinning away from his blocker and getting wide enough to get an arm, then two, on Ball. Then he just held on, legs churning against legs, until a gang of tacklers charged up and slammed into Ball.

"I felt he was slipping away, but then the cavalry came up," Pitts said.

They came up and Ball, a somewhat reluctant participant in the first place, went down with the kind of thud that could be heard inside Bruce Armstrong's hooded winter coat.

"They took out the lead blocker and got penetration," said Ball. "There was nowhere for me to go. That was it."

Not exactly. Things are never that simple for the Patriots, who had lost seven straight including the last six by six points or fewer going into yesterday's battle for the top draft pick and the bottom rung in the NFL ladder.

After Ball went down under an avalanche of Patriot defenders, New England took over at the 2 with 1:16 to play. After three straight runs netted 2 yards, it was time to punt again, an act that had been nearly disastrous just four minutes earlier.

As Armstrong worried, a decision was made to forgo the punt. Coach Bill Parcells instructed long snapper Marv Cook to snap the ball directly into the stands for an uncontested safety that would give the Bengals one last chance to attack, if you can call it that, with 19 seconds to play following New England's free kick.

As Saxon lined up to punt again, Bruce Armstrong fretted.

"We've played 59 minutes and 50 seconds the last few weeks with a chance to win and we've lost," Armstrong admitted. "You don't want to think negative, but, after seven years of this, you tell me you weren't thinking it could end up 9-7. I just want to be here long enough not to think like that."

Perhaps yesterday was a start. It was a win that came the way eight of their losses had -- after critical errors that all season have killed their chances for victory. Fumbles, missed field goals, interceptions, a penalty, failure on fourth and goal. You name it, it has happened this season.

Every time.

Until yesterday.

## ***Boston Vintage Sports Flashback***

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